

Amendments to the Claims

Claims 1-26 (Cancelled).

27. (New): A method for providing a proxy service in a computer network, comprising the steps of:

- (a) receiving at a first proxy server, a request from a client to access an application associated with a device;
- (b) determining a path to the device; and
- (c) the first proxy server redirecting the client to an access point for the path, where the access point is selected from the group consisting of a port on the first proxy server and the application associated with a device directly accessible by the client.

28. (New): A method according to claim 27, wherein the step of determining comprises dynamically establishing at least one communication channel along the path.

29. (New): A method according to claim 27, wherein the step of redirecting comprises sending a redirect message to the client which informs the client of the access point, by which the application may be accessed.

30. (New): A method according to claim 27, further comprising the step, before step (c), of ascertaining what firewall rules exist for the path.

31. (New): A method according to claim 30, wherein the step of ascertaining comprises using a network inventory to describe the devices that are to be considered by the proxy.

32. (New): A method according to claim 30, wherein the step of ascertaining comprises using device attributes apart from a native device IP address to select the

device.

33. (New): A method according to claim 30, wherein the step of ascertaining comprises using an inventory of devices to distinguish between devices that have IP numbering or network conflicts.

34. (New): A method according to claim 30, wherein the step of ascertaining comprises using physical topology information to determine a location of the device.

35. (New): A method according to claim 30, wherein the step of ascertaining comprises using physical topology information to determine and discriminate between non-routable networks with conflicting address information.

36. (New): A method according to claim 27, further comprising the step of authenticating the client.

37. (New): A method according to claim 27, further comprising the step of propagating information relating to the path to a second proxy server.

38. (New): A method according to claim 37, further comprising the step of authentication the second proxy server.

39. (New): A method according to claim 37, further comprising providing the second proxy server with an address of the client.

40. (New): A method according to claim 37, further comprising providing the second proxy server with an address of the device.

41. (New): A method according to claim 37, further comprising determining a remaining path to be traversed for the second proxy server.

42. (New): A method according to claim 37, further comprising the step of receiving information relating to the path from a third proxy server.
43. (New): A method according to claim 37, wherein the path comprises a communications channel between the first and second proxy servers.
44. (New): A method according to claim 27, further comprising the step of the client forwarding an access communication to the access point.
45. (New): A method according to claim 44, wherein the access communication is an HTTP protocol request.
46. (New): A method according to claim 44, wherein the access communication is a TCP request.
47. (New): A method according to claim 44, wherein the access communication appears to the application to emanate from the client.
48. (New): A method according to claim 44, wherein the access communication appears to the client to be directed to the application.
49. (New): A method according to claim 44, further comprising maintaining any authentication beyond completion of the access communication.

50. (New) A system for providing a proxy service in a computer network comprising a client and a device, comprising a first proxy server comprising:

- (a) a receiver for receiving a request from the client to access an application associated with the device;
- (b) a router for determining a path to the device; and
- (c) a redirector for redirecting the client to an access point for the path, where the access point is selected from the group consisting of a port on the first proxy server and the application associated with a device directly accessible by the client.

51. (New) A computer-readable medium for providing a proxy service in a computer network comprising a client and a device, said computer-readable medium having stored thereon computer-readable and computer-executable instructions, which when executed by a processor on a first proxy server, causes the processor to perform steps comprising:

- (a) receiving at the first proxy server, a request from the client to access an application associated with the device;
- (b) determining a path to the device; and
- (c) redirecting the client to an access point for the path, where the access point is selected from the group consisting of a port on the first proxy server and the application associated with a device directly accessible by the client.